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9 September 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Conversation with Mr. Ed Braswell re Senator Stennis'  
Letter to the President

1. Called Ed Braswell, Chief Counsel and Staff Director, Senate Armed Services Committee, to say we had officially received from the White House a copy of Senator Stennis' letter to the President urging that the Agency be relieved of the responsibility for the future funding of our operations in Laos. I told Mr. Braswell that I knew he had played a major part in drafting the letter and I thought it made a very important contribution to the problem that had been troubling us for some time.

2. I asked Mr. Braswell if he thought Senator Stennis would have any objection to our discussing the problems raised in his letter with the Office of Management and Budget and Defense Department, providing this was agreeable with the White House. Mr. Braswell said it was entirely up to the White House as to how the President disseminated the letter.

3. I said I would also like to know whether Senator Stennis was urging only that the CIA discontinue funding any part of the Laos operation, or was urging that we get out of the Laos operation entirely. Mr. Braswell said this was a key point in the letter--that the letter had deliberately left this question open. He said that frankly the Senator had not been specific on this, but Braswell had the impression that if the funding problem could be solved, the question of continued Agency involvement in other aspects of the program would be "negotiable."

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4. I said I was glad to hear this because I felt that we would need some flexibility working out a solution consistent with the Chairman's wishes and acceptable within the Executive agencies. I noted that we would be under considerable pressure from these other agencies to carry on.

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/JOHN M. MAURY  
Legislative Counsel

Distribution:

Original - Subject

1 - Senator Stennis

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